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ABSTRACT

Development of this 6-part inservice program making major use of programed instruction began in 1969 with the objective of modifying classroom teacher behavior in the direction of individualizing the instruction of students learning to control standard English. A review of literature on dialects gave some guidance toward determining the appropriate set of teacher behaviors needed for individualizing the usage curriculum. These behaviors include the ability to understand and write phonetic transcriptions of dialect speech, to prepare a list of nonstandard features found in these dialects, to prepare an individual curriculum for each child based on his type of nonstandard speech, and to select and organize commercially available materials on specific features of usage for the needs of individual students. Final results on whether the teacher trained with these materials can achieve the desired behaviors are expected in summer 1970. After further testing and revision, it is expected that the program will be made generally available in the fall of 1970. Further research is planned on the effect on student behavior of a program of individualized instruction in usage. (RT)

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Paper

for

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Development of Programmed Inservice Training on Dialects

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In the regional educational laboratories, "development is the name of the game." That is, the efforts of the labs are primarily focused on the development of products and procedures to affect relatively immediately the instructional practices in schools and colleges. Our work is to be based upon relevant basic research, but our own research strategy is to find out how well a product or process works and then to re-engineer the product by manipulating relevant variables until the product works as well as can be expected within constraints of time and money.

Given the charge to develop useful products, the Upper Midwest Regional Educational Laboratory, in one of its first in-house development efforts, projected a series of English inservice "kits," designed to effect a rapid updating of language arts teachers at the local level, largely through taking advantage of their capacity to educate themselves. The initial "kit," or instructional program, of this series was built substantially upon the model of the then-thriving English institute--which was essentially an information delivery system, fundamentally given to updating the teachers' knowledge and engaging them in some type of curriculum planning and decision-making.

The Laboratory's initial inservice effort was principally one of "packaging" expert linguistic testimony, in print and audio visual form, facilitating a "hands-on" engagement with pioneer curriculum materials and the literature of English education, and stimulating inter-level and inter-teacher discussions of content, teaching strategy, textbook selection, curriculum planning, and the like. No direct effort was made to modify the classroom behavior of the teacher, nor to verify with any precision that behavior had been modified. We acquired firm information that teachers can acquire knowledge through group study of our materials, but we had only hopes that classroom behavior would change. While we had strong expectations that behavior <u>would</u> change,

we did not know. This first program nevertheless was tested and revised several times, and this month has become available for national use through another agency.

But by March 1969, it had become evident that modification of classroom behaviors through training programs and systems management was the game at UMREL, and that this objective was to be consistently applied in all program components. Accordingly, the English inservice project at this point shifted to the task of changing teachers toward specified classroom behaviors.

The subject-matter of our first training program had been linguistics; and for the second program, we stayed within this realm to capitalize on our expertise. We chose to focus on dialect and usage, for along with many others, we were aware that a host of weak or irrelevant teacher behaviors over the past 75 years have come to cluster around the subject of usage, which is also known as "good grammar," "good English," or "correct English."

Our examination of studies and the literature of the field* (plus our experience) showed the weak and/or irrelevant behaviors, to name a few, to be: 1) filling in blanks in printed workbooks (in an attempt to deal with an oral event); 2) teaching formal (and usually old fashioned, incongruous) grammar for years on end in the face of evidence from research that there is no demonstrated relationship between knowledge of formal grammar and effectiveness of one's writing and speaking; and 3) from our point of view worst of all, the practice of teaching all students about all problems in standard English usage without regard to the individual performance of the student on any of them. That is, to give an example, the student who never in his life would use a multiple

* Karen M. Hess. "Review of the Literature--Dialect and Usage," Minneapolis, Upper Midwest Regional Educational Laboratory. (mimeo)

negation ("haven't got no money") is, year after year, forced to do work which attempts to assure that he won't.

We took as our ultimate objective, the individualization of instruction of students learning to control standard English. Our analysis showed that the teacher had to be supplied with certain information and skills in order to be able to write individualized curricula and to take first steps toward individualizing instruction in usage.

Our review of the literature on dialects and on dialect learning gave us some guidance toward determining the appropriate set of behaviors. The materials which you have been given contain a brief statement of the six behaviors needed for individualizing the usage curriculum.

You will probably recognize that the teacher--either elementary and secondary--who acquires this set of behaviors will have to acquire some skills traditionally associated with speech therapy, but the resemblance is superficial; for in dealing with dialect speakers, the teacher cannot look upon the speaker as somehow deficient. His "home" language is a useful and complex accomplishment. The diagnosis is used only to help the teacher add to, or augment, the learner's linguistic resources by increasing his control of standard English. No attempt is made to eliminate dialect difference.

In making a diagnosis, the teacher must first gather a controlled sample of student speech, either through tape recording or by listening to the student in a relatively formal situation--the type of speech situation where standard English is important. Then, an analysis of this speech stream is conducted by the teacher in a framework of information about dialects in general, and nonstandard dialects in particular. A classification of the learner's nonstandard utterances is made according to vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammatical categories. The teacher's next task is to determine which of the nonstandard features in the learner's speech is important to

social and economic success. This decision is made according to up-to-date information which the training program provides.

In order to know what is important for the student to learn, the teacher needs current information on what decision-makers in society deem nonstandard in English. This information simply didn't exist and the Laboratory had to secure it. We had to devise an instrument and conduct our own survey of public attitudes toward usage. This procedure, called the UMREL Usage Survey, has gathered and is continuing to gather data from several of the dialect regions.

Teachers involved in our training program apply this up-to-date data to select a small set of critical nonstandard features which becomes the student's individualized usage curriculum. The teacher must then be able to make use of a storage system, or "bank," which refers him to specific learning materials related to the nonstandard utterances of the student.

To create this set of behaviors in teachers, the Laboratory has made major use of programmed instruction. This has been done not only because such a mode capitalizes on expertise available within the Laboratory but also because programmed instruction can enhance the self-study idea which has been a central element in UMREL's program of English inservice from the beginning. It is also pertinent to observe that if we are going to propose that teachers individualize instruction, then their own instruction should be individualized as much as possible and programmed learning makes this individualization possible.

Six programmed instruction components were developed: (1) a short linear program on the nature and origins of dialects; (2) a longer program with taped practice materials to develop the skill of making broad phonetic transcriptions

of speech utterances; and (3) an even longer program detailing the major features of various nonstandard dialects -- also with practice exercises designed to increase teachers' capacities to hear, record, and categorize the speech events around them. The remaining programs were developed to build the teacher's skill in securing valid, formal speech streams; in writing an individualized curriculum for each learner; and in using the "banking" system which will hold the increasingly available individualized instructional materials on usage.

The six programs were written and then tested on Laboratory staff; next they were revised and tested in-house with a small set of teachers; and they were again revised and tested outside the Laboratory with an UMREL staff member as leader. This winter they were revised a third time and at this moment are being tested with undergraduates in one institution, faculty and undergraduates in another, teachers under the direction of a college faculty member at a school in California, and with a set of Minneapolis teachers under leadership of a teacher whom we previously trained in the program. In addition, an "autoinstructional" version has been developed and is being tested with several individuals.

In all cases, the completed programs and pre-post tests and related materials are being returned to us for analysis leading to revision. Pre- and post-measures give us data on teacher progress toward attainment of criterion behaviors, not only for the whole package but also for the sub-parts.

Analysis of completed programs indicate weaknesses of programming. In the fall field test, to give an example of how we use our data, we found substantial gains in the capacity of teachers to acquire information about dialects and to write phonetic transcriptions of speech streams uttered by standard speakers who read nonstandard passages into test tapes. On the other hand,

we found unsatisfactory progress in teachers' ability to listen to nonstandard speakers uttering the same forms. The data indicated that teachers needed much direct practice in listening to nonstandard speakers. Consequently, in revision this winter we added one and one-half hours of listening practice to the training program. Current field-tests will tell whether these additions are worthwhile.

As another example of our use of data, the fall tests indicated that our testing procedures consumed too much time, that the tests could be safely cut in half and still provide reliable data, and further that the attitudes of our participants could be enhanced by reduced testing.

We should know firmly by summer 1970 whether the teachers trained through our revised materials can perform the desired skills at criterion levels. However, whether they will transform their classroom instruction in grammatical usage is quite another question. While the mode of individualized instruction we have set forth in the training program is the one most likely to save student time, it does, however, create demands on the teachers' time. Whether teachers will adopt the individualized approach is partially dependent on our solutions to the problems of time and effort required of the teacher.

During the next few months, we will be examining the application of the individualized system in Minneapolis classrooms. This will bring us closer to the ultimate question: What happens to <u>student</u> behavior as a consequence of an individualized program of instruction in usage?

In an ideal sense, we should start by modifying student behavior through proven instructional strategies and materials and then "back up" to train the teachers. Frankly, we are forced to await the development of proven instruc-

tional materials which can be plugged into classrooms and used in the individualized instructional mode. Some such classroom materials are under development in other agencies, but tested and proven materials are scarce. Thus given the paucity of proven materials, we must rest, at least temporarily, on the premise that a multiple-materials approach is the best bet pending availability of proven materials. We will continue to search for, test, and apply relevant materials, and this will all take time. But in the mean time, if we do nothing else but foster the habit of treating usage and dialect as individual learning tasks--of creating individualized curricula--we will have helped reduce the tremendous waste of student time which occurs daily in English classes across the nation.

What we have sought to present here is not the data on a completed study, but a description of how we work in the developmental mode. On an attached page, I have sketched a generalized statement of the outline we follow in development. We have hoped to enlarge your understanding of what we are attempting to do and some of the problems we face. In a sense, our mode of work and our problems are somewhat new and somewhat different from those experienced by other researchers. We occupy a position somewhere between (and affected by) the rigors of basic research and the looser worlds of publishing and so-called "action research." It is a position which involves interesting and sometimes very annoying problems; yet, withal, it has its satisfactions because it holds relatively immediate promise of affecting the behaviors of teachers and children in schools.

STEPS in Developmental Process

1. Determine topic (Arbitrary, philosophical, curriculum decision, other rules)

2. Characterize present behaviors (e.g. Teacher can hear and understand speakers of standard English and most varieties of nonstandard English)

3. Describe terminal behaviors (e.g. Teacher can hear and understand speakers of regionally standard English and all varieties of nonstandard English)

4. List deficiencies of learners (The curriculum) (e.g. Teacher shall be able to understand speakers of all varieties of nonstandard English)

5. Write training program to deal with deficiency (e.g. Aural-oral practice tapes to increase skill of understanding all nonstandard speakers)

6. Test the training program
   a. Are criteria met?
   b. How can time and effort be reduced? ("Lean" program)

7. Revise training program and retest; reiterate if necessary